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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Identification

This Concept of Operations (ConOps) document is a high-level description of the General Services Administration's (GSA) Evaluation Program for SIN 132-62 products and services to determine qualifications of Vendor products and services against the qualification criteria listed on the GSA ID Management web site (www.idmanagement.gov).

This document establishes an overview of the evaluation process carried out by the Smart Identification Office (SID).

1.2 Background, Objectives and Scope

On August 27, 2004, Homeland Security Presidential Directive-12 (HSPD-12) -"Policy for a Common Identification Standard for Federal Employees and Contractors" was issued. HSPD-12 directed the promulgation of a new Federal standard for a secure and reliable form of identification issued by all Federal Agencies to their employees and contractors.

In response to this directive, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) published FIPS 201 – "Personal Identity Verification (PIV) for Federal Employees and Contractors" on February 25, 2005. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) designated GSA as the Executive Agent for government-wide acquisitions for the implementation of HSPD-12. OMB has directed Federal agencies to purchase only products and services that are compliant with the Federal policy, standards and numerous supporting technical specifications.

Additionally, NIST has established the NIST Personal Identity Verification Program (NPIVP) to validate PIV components and sub-systems required by FIPS 201 that meet the NPIVP requirements. To ensure standard compliant products and services are available, NIST will issue test suites in Special Publication (SP) 800-85 -PIV Middleware and PIV Card Application Conformance Test Guidelines. At present, the NPIVP validation program includes FIPS 201 Interface Validation of PIV Card Applications and PIV Middleware for conformance to SP 800-73 -Interfaces for Personal Identity Verification. Additional NPIVP validation programs will be added as the PIV program evolves.

Critical to the success of NPIVP was the establishment of test facilities (Labs) to evaluate products and services offered for use in HSPD-12. Labs will ensure products and services are compliant with established FIPS 201 requirements. That is, if the Lab analysis or evaluation demonstrates that an applicant's product or service complies with FIPS 201 specifications, as revised from time to time, then the name and version of the applicant's product or service will be added to an Approved FIPS 201 Products and Services List.

To further ensure only qualified products and services are placed under SIN 132-62, SID will evaluate Vendor qualifications against a set of criteria to determine their ability to provide fully compliant HSPD-12 components and systems.

The purpose of this ConOps document is to define the roles, responsibilities, processes, and procedures necessary to evaluate the qualifications of Vendors who propose fully compliant components and/or systems. In addition, the ConOps discusses the principles and practices underlying SID operations such as privacy, confidentiality, security, and scheduling.

Strict adherence to the ConOps will result in a consistent evaluation of products and services, and unbiased results.

1.3 Constraints

The SID ConOps is governed by the following constraints:

- Qualification packages submitted to SID will be evaluated on a first-come first-serve basis. In this respect, there will be no prioritization between different packages. Therefore, after a package is received by SID, it awaits its turn for evaluation until all other packages received prior to it have been evaluated.
- The SID is responsible for evaluating the qualifications of Vendors against an established set of criteria for each category of products and services outlined in FIPS 201: enrollment, SIP, card production, card finalization and integration.

1.4 Document Organization

The layout of the ConOps is largely based on the IEEE Standard 1362-1998 and describes a support process and not a system. Nothing in this document is confidential or business proprietary. The remaining document is organized in the following sections:

- Section 2 – lists all documents that have been referenced in this document;
- Section 3 – describes the roles and responsibilities for the staff and organizations involved in the evaluation;
- Section 4 – outlines the process which Vendor packages undergo as a prerequisite to placement on SIN 132-62;
- Section 5 – describes the principles and practices that guide the SID evaluation operation;
- Appendix A – provides a list of documents and forms used by SID, during its operation; and

- Appendix B – lists the various acronyms and abbreviations used throughout this document.

2.0 Referenced Documents

The following are a list of references which have been used to develop this document.

HSPD 12, Policy for a Common Identification Standard for Federal Employees and Contractors, August 27, 2004.

(Available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/08/20040827-8.html>.)

NIST FIPS 201, Personal Identity Verification (PIV) of Federal Employees and Contractors, NIST, February 25, 2005

(Available at <http://csrc.nist.gov/publications/fips/fips201/FIPS-201-022505.pdf>.)

NIST Special Publication 800-73, Interfaces for Personal Identity Verification, NIST, April 2005.

(Available at <http://csrc.nist.gov/publications/nistpubs/800-73/SP800-73-Final.pdf>.)

NIST Special Publication 800-76, Biometric Data Specification for Personal Identity Verification, NIST, February 2005.

(Available at <http://csrc.nist.gov/publications/nistpubs/800-76/sp800-76.pdf>.)

NIST Special Publication 800-78, Cryptographic Algorithms and Key Sizes for Personal Identity Verification, NIST, April 2005.

(Available at <http://csrc.nist.gov/publications/nistpubs/800-78/sp800-78-final.pdf>.)

NIST Special Publication 800-79, Guidelines for the Certification and Accreditation of PIV Card Issuing Organizations, NIST, July 2005.

(Available at <http://csrc.nist.gov/publications/nistpubs/800-79/sp800-79.pdf>.)

3.0 Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of various SID personnel and other organizations are described in further detail below.

3.1 SID Director

The SID Director is responsible for the overall operation of the evaluation process, which includes oversight of evaluation and quality assurance. The SID Director is responsible for:

- Setting the daily goals for the organization;
- Ensuring all operations adhere to the security and confidentiality requirements;

- Making efficient, effective use of the SID staff and other resources;
- Ensuring all evaluation activities are performed consistent with this ConOps;
- Appointing roles and delegating responsibilities;
- Briefing the PMO on evaluation status;
- Maintaining updates to the SID policies and procedures;
- Ensuring that appropriate mechanisms are in place to protect the interests of all parties;
- Recommending Vendors to the Schedule Contracting Officer;
- Authorizing submission of the failure notice to the Applicant; and
- Resolving disputes and/or disagreements submitted by Vendors.

3.2 SID Relationship Manager (RM)

For the evaluation of Vendor qualifications, the SDI RM has the following responsibilities:

- Receiving, reviewing and approving the application package;
- Determining the composition of the Technical Evaluation Team;
- Primary point of contact for Applicant interaction and evaluation;
- Assisting Vendors with the application process;
- Facilitating delivery of compliance evidence and deliverables necessary for evaluation (i.e. the Application package);
- Briefing the Vendor on evaluation status of their product or service; and
- Transmitting the approval or failure notification to the Applicant. In the case of a failure notice it will be in writing but can be an email.

3.3 SID Team Lead (TL)

A SID Team Lead (TL) is responsible for the evaluation of proposals assigned to their specific team and has the following responsibilities:

- Prioritizing evaluation and other day-to-day team tasks;
- Assigning resources for evaluating proposals;
- Overseeing and facilitating successful conclusion of day-to-day tasks in accordance with project plans, budgets, and SID objectives;
- Communicating with the Vendors in the event issues arise during the evaluation of a proposal;
- Assisting in reviewing and resolving disputes and complaints submitted by Vendors, along with the SID Director and RM where appropriate; and
- Preparing and providing evaluation reports to the SID RM for approval.

3.4 Vendor/Applicant

A Vendor can request either a SID review of their qualifications for a specific component or the entire system.

The Applicant has the following responsibilities:

- Accurately completing the application package;
- Providing evidence and deliverables necessary for the SID to determine compliance with applicable approval criteria; and
- Providing technical staff either onsite or via telephone, during the evaluation of the Vendor's package, to assist the SID Technical Evaluation Team.

3.5 Approval Authority

The Approval Authority is the SID Director and has the following responsibilities:

- Reviewing evaluation reports prepared by the SID TL and signed by the SID RM;
- Exercises the authority to recommend a Vendor be placed on SIN 132-62; and
- Communicating approval decisions to the Schedule Contracting Officer.

4.0 SID Evaluation Process

This section outlines the process through which qualification packages are evaluated prior to being placed on SIN 132-62.

4.1 Concept Overview

The evaluation of Vendor qualifications is carried out using a GSA provided website (www.idmanagement.gov). Vendors, who desire to have their qualifications evaluated to provide fully compliant systems or components, go to the website to obtain information regarding the evaluation criteria and process. Vendors can gather relevant information (i.e. application forms, product and service categories, approval procedures etc.) regarding the evaluation program, its goal and what is expected from them if they were to submit their qualifications for evaluation against the criteria listed for the various HSPD-12 system components.

Once a package is submitted, the SID RM schedules the evaluation based on a First-In-First-Out (FIFO) scheme. The evaluation process for a particular product or service is envisioned to be completed as quickly as possible by the SID in order to maximize the number of qualified Vendors for each HSPD-12 system component. Vendors determined to be qualified will be recommended to the Contracting Officer for placement under SIN 132-62. Vendors who are determined to be unqualified will have to resubmit the entire application package to the SID and await their turn once again in the evaluation queue.

Details corresponding to the Application process are described in the sections below.

4.2 Application Package Submission

In order to proceed with the qualification evaluation, the Vendor submits their completed application package to the SID RM. Details of the contents of the application package may vary based on the component category and are available to Vendors from the ID Management website.

Once an application package is received by the SID RM, it undergoes a preliminary review for completeness. The application package contains the following:

- Evaluation Application Form;
- Component intended for evaluation;
- Complete documentation; and
- Required approval mechanism data (i.e. certifications, attestations, Vendor test data, etc).

4.2.1 Application Package Review

The next step in the process is for the SID RM to review the submitted package and either accept it as complete or notify the Vendor of any deficiency. Acceptance or denial of each package will be decided upon using the following evaluation criteria:

- Applicant has successfully completed the Application Form (all required information is provided and complete); and
- All necessary documentation has been provided.

If the application package is deemed to be incomplete, the Vendor will be notified and provided information on next steps. The SID will retain a copy of the application package. An incomplete application package will be held on file for only thirty (30) days if deficiencies are not addressed. If an application package is destroyed, the Vendor must resubmit their application package.

If the application package is complete, the SID RM assigns the package to one of the available SID TLs.

The Vendor's submission is placed in the evaluation queue whereby it will wait its turn to undergo evaluation against the mandatory criteria of the applicable component(s).

4.2.2 Schedule Evaluation

All packages under evaluation are managed by the SID RM. The SID RM assigns resources and determines the evaluation schedule based on the current workload of the SID. The SID RM will identify project constraints specifying time, equipment, and personnel.

The SID RM forwards the submitted application package to the SID TL who in turn provides it to the other two members of the SID Technical Evaluation Team (TET) assigned to conduct the evaluation. If needed, the SID TL coordinates with the SID RM and the Vendor's technical representative if the need so arises.

4.2.3 Evaluation Process

Once the Vendor's package reaches the end of the queue, the SID RM schedules the evaluation and assigns the necessary resources. The SID TET then documents the results of their evaluation of the Vendor's qualification against the criteria for that particular component(s). The SID TL then compiles the evaluation report and submits it to the SID RM. Based on whether the qualifications of the applicant are determined to fully meet all criteria for that particular component or not, the SID Director either authorizes submission of a recommendation notice to the Schedule Contracting Officer or a failure notice to the Vendor.

In the event that a failure notice is communicated to the Vendor, the Vendor has the option to request a failure review. Details on the failure review process are described in Section 4.2.10.

Details corresponding to the Evaluation process are described in the sections below.

4.2.4 Evaluation Report Preparation

After the approval procedures for the appropriate category have been carried out by the SID TET, the next step is to prepare the evaluation report.

This evaluation report is prepared by the SID TL, irrespective of whether it is determined to be a pass or failure to meet the qualification criteria. Once prepared, the SID TL forwards the report to the SID RM for approval and subsequent forwarding to the SID Director.

The SID TL will ensure that the evaluation report displays the sensitivity marking "Confidential" on each page of the report. The SID restricts distribution of the report only to the Approval Authorities cited above.

The SID Director provides the final sign-off on the evaluation report after consultation with the SID RM and, if necessary, the SID TL. The Director makes the final recommendation to the Schedule Contracting Officer for inclusion under SIN 132-62.

4.2.5 Notifications

After the evaluation for a particular product or service is complete and the evaluation report is prepared, the SID RM notifies either the Approval Authority or the Vendor based on the results of the evaluation. The evaluation result can be either pass or fail.

4.2.6 Pass

For packages that are found to fully meet the criteria listed for that particular component or system, a pass notification is provided to the Schedule Contracting Officer by the SID Director.

4.2.7 Fail

In case of a failure i.e. a proposal is determined to not fully meet the criteria, the Vendor is notified of the failure by the SID RM. The SID Director authorizes the submission of a formal failure notice, which is transmitted to the Vendor by the Relationship Manager.

The Vendor has the opportunity to dispute the evaluation result with the SID via a failure review process if they so choose. Details of the review are provided in Section 4.2.10. Vendors who do not meet all the criteria for a particular component need to re-submit their application packages after correcting the deficiencies and await their turn once again in the evaluation queue.

4.2.8 Government Review

Upon submission of the report, if the Approval Authority has any questions or concerns regarding an item in the evaluation report, the Approval Authority will contact the SID RM for clarification. The RM then consults with the SID TL whose evaluation report is under question. The SID RM with assistance from the SID TL then discusses the findings with the Approval Authority in order to resolve any ambiguities in the final evaluation report.

4.2.9 Government Approval

The Approval Authority is responsible for recommending which Vendors are placed under SIN 132-62. The final decision for a Vendor to be placed under SIN 132-62 rest solely with the Schedule Contracting Officer.

4.2.10 Failure Review

A Vendor that has a disagreement with a SID decision submits a Failure Review Form to the SID RM. This form can be obtained from the ID Management website.

The form is reviewed for completeness, and incomplete submissions are returned to the Vendor who has fifteen (15) calendar days to re-submit their dispute.

This review includes thoroughly examining all documentation in the Vendor's case file and interviewing the SID TL and the SID TET assigned to the Vendor's package.

The SID Director then discusses the submission and findings with the Vendor. If the disagreement is resolved during this discussion, the SID Director documents that result.

The SID Director then submits a recommendation to the Schedule Contracting Officer to add the Vendor under SIN 132-62.

5.0 SID Principles and Practices

This section discusses the core principles and practices that underlie SID operations.

5.1 Privacy and Confidentiality

Operation of the SID evaluation process is predicated on privacy and confidentiality, in accordance with applicable laws, and to the extent sufficient to protect participants and stakeholders. Certain information collected and maintained by the SID may be Vendor confidential. An example would be the desire to get their qualifications evaluated in the SID. Similarly, some information is SID confidential. An example would be which Vendors are in, or planned to be in, the SID for evaluation.

5.2 Scheduling

SID scheduling is flexible to accommodate priorities as they may evolve over time. As staff and resources allow, evaluations may occur in parallel.

The SID typically operates on a FIFO scheme for evaluating applicant qualifications. In this regard, after an application package is considered complete and accepted by the SID, it awaits its turn for evaluation until all other packages that were received previously have been completed. This scheme is typically followed by the SID unless the PMO directs the SID to operate in another sequence, based on current priorities.

Appendix A: Document/Form List

The following lists the various document and forms used during the daily operations of the SID evaluation process:

- **Evaluation Cover Sheet Form:** The form a Vendor submits as part of the application package in order to have their product(s) or service(s) evaluated against the criteria for a particular component(s).
- **Evaluation Report Form:** A formal report prepared by the SID TL stating that the Vendor either qualifies to be on SIN 132-62 or has failed to qualify.
- **Failure Notice Form:** A notification sent by the SID RM stating that the Vendor's qualifications do not fully meet the criteria for the component(s) they are applying for.
- **Failure Review Form:** The form a Vendor submits when in disagreement with the result of an evaluation performed by the SID.

Appendix B: Acronyms and Abbreviations

CONOPS - Concept of Operations
EPD - Evaluation Program Development
FIFO - First-In-First-Out
FIPS - Federal Information Processing Standard
GSA - General Services Administration
HSPD - Homeland Security Presidential Directive
IEEE - Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers
NIST - National Institute of Standards and Technology
NPIVP - NIST Personal Identity Verification Program
OMB - Office of Management and Budget
OGP - Office of Government-wide Policy
PIV - Personal Identity Verification
PMO - Program Management Office
SID RM – Relationship Manager
SID - Smart Identification Office
SID TL – Team Lead
SID TET – Technical Evaluation Team
SP - Special Publication